

St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	101598
Inspection date	31/03/2009
Inspector	Sally Wride
Setting address	Brotherhood Hall, Lyefield Road East, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 8AU
Telephone number	01242 260080
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

St Mary's Playgroup is a community run group established in 1966. It operates from a village hall next to an infant school in Charlton Kings, a residential area to the south of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The group has strong links with the school. There is a fully enclosed play area available for outdoor play.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 40 children attending who are within the early years age range. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early years provision. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. On a Monday, Wednesday and Friday sessions are from 09.00 until 12.50 and from 09.00 until 12.00 on a Tuesday and Thursday. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language. The building is accessed via a short ramp.

The setting employs six members of child care staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are two members of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are extremely happy, confident and settled and have great fun in an environment where their welfare needs are predominantly promoted with success. They make excellent progress in their learning and development and relish taking part in meaningful, exciting and stimulating activities and spontaneous play. Children's individual needs are well known by experienced and well qualified staff who cater for these extremely well in the inclusive care environment. Children benefit greatly from the strong relationships that their parents and carers enjoy with staff. Although systems for self-evaluation are developing well, one welfare requirement has not been met in full. There are, however, plans in place for the future to ensure areas identified for further development are acted upon. As a result, the provision demonstrates good capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that the safeguarding children policy and procedure is in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance and procedures and that all other policies and procedures reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage

(EYFS).

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- maintain a record of aspects identified in the risk assessment that need to be checked on a regular basis, inclusive of details of when they are checked and by whom (Suitable premises, environment and equipment).

14/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from the leadership and management of both the supportive committee and enthusiastic and committed management team. Children are protected through effective systems for the safe recruitment, vetting and induction of staff. Whilst the many strengths of the setting have been recognised through processes of self-evaluation, not all areas requiring further improvement have been identified. As a result, a welfare requirement relating to risk assessment has not been completed in full. Although a full and well detailed risk assessment is conducted each year, no record is maintained of aspects identified that need to be checked on a regular basis. There are, however, plans in place for the future to ensure all other areas identified for further development are acted upon. They proactively seek the views and wishes of children, parents, carers and staff, using these to inform their plans. This demonstrates the provision's strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

The manager and staff work very well together as a committed and enthusiastic team. Excellent and continuous communication enables information to flow effectively, ensuring consistency and continuity for all children. Staff use their time extremely well to ensure that every child's individual and unique needs are well met. Adult to child ratios are well maintained and ensure that children receive high levels of care and support. Staff have ongoing access to training which ensures they remain up-to-date with current good practice and changes within the early years field.

Children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded because staff have a solid understanding of the known indicators of child abuse and also of the action that they should take in the event of a concern about a child in their care. However, the written safeguarding policy and procedure has not been updated to reflect the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidelines. In addition, although all other policies and procedures are in place and work well in practice, they still refer to past requirements and have not been updated to reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Effective procedures are in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. This ensures that all children are supported to achieve their full

potential. Parents and carers are able to view and contribute to their children's assessment and observation records at any time and these are formally shared at regular times throughout the year. The setting proactively develops relationships with other providers delivering the EYFS to ensure that appropriate information is effectively shared, promoting children's progression and continuity of learning and care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children relish their time at playgroup and the vast range of rewarding activities and play opportunities available. These offer a wealth of choice and capture children's interest and imaginations. As a result, children are purposeful in their play, concentrate well and readily make decisions about how they would like to spend their time. Children are supported by a capable, skilled and experienced staff team, assisted by parent helpers, which creates a stimulating learning environment. Consistent observation, monitoring and assessment of children's progress results in staff having a clear vision of each child's learning needs. Staff use their excellent knowledge of children to ensure planned activities incorporate children's differing needs, supporting children to consolidate their learning or move on to the next stage. Children are busy and occupied in their play and behave very well. They receive warm praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements which positively fosters their self-esteem. They develop an appreciation of the wider world as they explore cultural and religious events throughout the year. They access a suitable range of toys and resources which reflect positive images of diversity.

Children are confident and have excellent opportunities to use their independence throughout the session. For example, they help staff cut fruit prior to snack time. Children are confident speakers, encouraged by staff who provide effective explanations to children's questions and encourage meaningful conversation. Children express themselves clearly, readily joining in discussions and answering questions. They listen and respond very well to stories and enjoy looking at books. Children relish the many opportunities for mark making, for example, in the sand, drawing and painting. Some children are able to write their own names whilst others form recognisable letters. All children are able to recognise their own names. Children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills are fostered very well in practical contexts. Each day they count how many children are present, finding the total number and adding this to the total number of adults present. They compare different groups to explore more and less and how many there are in total when added together. They use toys, such as plastic fruits, to compare different sized groups and sort these into different types. These lead to interesting discussions between children and staff about the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle through eating a healthy diet.

Children are busy in the well resourced role play area, using their imaginations well. Children handle tools, competently managing scissors to cut and rollers and cutters when making use of the play dough. They are physically confident and energetic as a result of regular indoor and outdoor activities and externally provided physical education sessions. They begin to understand the importance of

taking regular exercise as they take part in warm up sessions at the start of the day. Children are creative. They draw, paint and colour expressively, using different medium and techniques. They competently operate the computer, making excellent use of age-appropriate programmes. Children wash their hands at appropriate times and understand that this is to remove germs which may make them ill. They are growing increasingly aware of perceived dangers and of how they can keep themselves safe, for example, through practising regular fire evacuations and following desirable behaviours when playing indoors. Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks each day which offer variety and choice. Their dietary needs and preferences are well known by staff and catered for. Fresh drinks are provided throughout the session, ensuring children are well hydrated.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.